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Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9964

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 5309

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FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PGOV, CG
SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON DRAFT MEMO: OPTIONS AFTER SHABA II

REF: STATE 130816

1. I HAVE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON OPTIONS CONTAINED IN DRAFT PAPER TRANSMITTED REFTEL:

2. OPTION I (SIGNIFICANT ASSISTANCE, BUT WITHOUT REFORM): I DO NOT RPT NOT FAVOR THIS OPTION, BECAUSE UNLESS CURRENT DOMESTIC DETERIORATION IN ZAIRE IS ARRESTED THE MOBUTU REGIME SEEMS EVENTUALLY BOUND TO FALL. WE WOULD BE INCREASINGLY IDENTIFIED AS ACCEPTING AND SUPPORTING THE REGIME WITHOUT REGARD TO THE PEOPLE. IN DOING SO, OUR IMAGE AND PRESTIGE WOULD BE INCREASINGLY DAMAGED AND, ONCE NEW LEADERSHIP TOOK OVER, OUR ABILITY TO INFLUENCE THAT LEADERSHIP WOULD PROBABLY BE REDUCED.

3. OPTION III (MAINTAIN CURRENT ASSISTANCE COMMITMENTS AND POSTURE): THE NEW POST-KOLWEZI SITUATION MAKES THIS OPTION INEFFECTIVE IN TERMS OF PRESERVING US/WESTERN INTERESTS. WE WOULD IN EFFECT BE SIGNALING OUR ASSUMPTION THAT THE REGIME WILL FALL AND OUR WILLING-
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NESS TO TAKE OUR CHANCES WITH WHATEVER REPLACES IT WITHOUT MAKING ANY EFFORT TO ASSURE A SUCCESSOR REGIME WHICH WOULD BE AMENABLE TO US. THE MARKED DIFFERENCE IN OUR POSTURE VIS-A-VIS THAT OF THE FRENCH AND BELGIANS MIGHT SERVE TO GIVE US SOME ADDITIONAL OPTIONS WITH

THE NEW LEADERSHIP. HOWEVER, THIS RESULT, CHANCY AT BEST, WOULD BE AT THE PRICE OF PROBABLE DAMAGE TO OUR RELATIONS WITH MODERATE

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GOVERNMENTS ELSEWHERE. WE COULD WELL LOSE OUT ON BOTH SCORES.

4. OPTION II (SIGNIFICANT ASSISTANCE BUT TIED TO REAL REFORM):
THIS IS THE PREFERRED OPTION - A COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE OF STIFF
REFORMS DESIGNED TO EFFECT ECONOMIC RECOVERY, NATIONAL SECURITY,
AND POLITICAL STABILITY. ASSUMING WE STAY WITH MOBUTU, WE WOULD
HAVE TO EXTRACT FROM HIM A MORE EXPLICIT COMMITMENT THAN WE HAVE TO
DATE THAT HE WOULD SERIOUSLY IMPLEMENT SUCH A PROGRAM. SUCH A
COMMITMENT WOULD FIRST REQUIRE SOLID AGREEMENT AND A COMMON WILL
AMONG THE PRINCIPAL DONOR INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNMENTS, WITH
BELGIUM AND FRANCE TAKING THE LEAD. ONCE SUCH AGREEMENT IS
ACHIEVED, THEN WE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE CLEAR TO MOBUTU THAT
RESOURCES WOULD FLOW ONLY TO THE EXTENT THAT IMPLEMENTATION IS
ACHIEVED, IN ACCORDANCE WITH A SYSTEM OF CLOSE, PERIODIC CHECKS
CONDUCTED BY THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP OR ANOTHER FORUM OF DONORS
ESTABLISHED SPECIFICALLY TO OVERSEE THE REFORMS.

5. A PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL/MILITARY REFORM ALONE WOULD
PROBABLY NOT PROVE SUFFICIENT TO REGAIN THE POPULAR SUPPORT FOR
THE REGIME WHICH IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE SUCCESS OF OUR EFFORTS.
THEREFORE, PRIOR TO PROVIDING ANY ASSISTANCE, WE SHOULD
INSIST ON MOBUTU'S FIRM COMMITMENT TO MAKE HIS REGIME
MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE PEOPLE'S NEEDS. THIS WOULD
ENTAIL A SERIES OF STEPS -- SOME SUBSTANTIVE, SOME SYMBOLIC --
WHICH WOULD CONSTITUTE MORE GENUINE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REFORM THAN
WE HAVE SO FAR SEEN. WITHOUT GOING INTO DETAILS HERE, THE FORMER
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WOULD BE DESIGNED ESSENTIALLY TO PUT LIFE AND SUBSTANCE INTO EXISTING
INSTITUTIONS -- E.G., THE PRIME MINISTER, THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,
THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL -- AND THEREBY DECENTRALIZE THE DECISION-
MAKING PROCESS, AND GREASE THE WHEELS OF GOVERNMENT. AS A GESTURE
TOWARD NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, MOBUTU COULD APPOINT TO HIGH
OFFICE -- PREFERABLY THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP -- SOME ACCEPTABLE
TO THE DISAFFECTED SHABANS. HE COULD ALSO DEMONSTRATE A REAL
DETERMINATION TO CURB CORRUPTION, STARTING WITH A DRAMATIC VOLUNTARY
REPATRIATION OF A PORTION OF HIS PERSONAL WEALTH PRESUMABLY HELD
ABROAD, AND EXTENDING DOWN TO TIGHTER DISCIPLINE OF FAZ SOLDIERS
WHOSE HARSH TREATMENT OF THE CIVILIAN POPULACE HAS BEEN
DOING SO MUCH DAMAGE IN TERMS OF POPULAR PERCEPTION OF AND SUPPORT
FOR THE REGIME. THESE ARE JUST EXAMPLES OF THE KIND OF INTERNAL
REFORMS IN ADDITION TO THOSE LISTED IN THE DRAFT PAPER WHICH SHOULD
BE INCLUDED IN A LARGER PACKAGE. THE ESSENTIAL POINT IS THAT MOBUTU
MUST FIND WAYS TO DEMONSTRATE A GREATER IDENTITY WITH THE
PEOPLE AND NOT JUST THE ELITE IF HIS REGIME IS TO SURVIVE FOR THE
RATHER
LENGTHY PERIOD WHICH WILL BE REQUIRED TO TURN THE ECONOMY AROUND.

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FROM AMBASSADOR

6. THE IDEAL SCENARIO UNDER OPTION II MIGHT BE TO PLACE THE ASSISTANCE/REFORM PACKAGE IN THE HANDS OF A LEADER (OR LEADERS) WHO OFFERS MORE CERTAIN PROMISE OF SERIOUS IMPLEMENTATION THAN DOES MOBUTU. BUT THE PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS OF SUCH A COURSE OF ACTION ARE SUCH THAT I CANNOT RECOMMEND IT AT THIS TIME. IF WE WERE TO INSIST ON MOBUTU'S WITHDRAWAL'S WE WOULD HAVE TO HAVE SOME VIABLE ALTERNATIVE IN MIND. AT THIS POINT WE ARE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY SUCH AN ALTERNATIVE, AND THE MERE PLANNING FOR IT WOULD RISK INDUCING A PREMATURE POLITICAL UPHEAVAL AND EVEN GREATER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DISARRAY. MOREOVER, BY TAKING SUCH DRASTIC ACTION, WE WOULD ASSUME THE MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOLLOWING THROUGH WITH SUFFICIENT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT TO BE SURE THE NEW LEADERSHIP SUCCEEDS. ON THE PRACTICAL LEVEL, WE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY PERSUADING OTHER DONORS -- NOTABLY THE FRENCH -- TO GO ALONG WITH SUCH A DRASTIC STEP. I NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE WE SHOULD DISCREETLY EXPLORE THIS POSSIBILITY AT HIGH LEVELS WITH THE FRENCH AND BELGIANS. IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT OUR SOUNDINGS REVEALED AN INCLINATION ON THEIR PART TOWARD CHANGE, WE SHOULD CONSIDER THE MATTER FURTHER BEFORE CASTING OUR LOT WITH MOBUTU FOR LACK OF ANY OTHER OPTION.

7. I SHOULD IN ALL FAIRNESS NOTE HERE THAT SEVERAL MEMBERS OF
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THE COUNTRY TEAM STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE MOBUTU REGIME IS INCAPABLE OF REFORM, AND THAT CORRUPTION AND INEPTITUDE WILL

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INEVITABLY BRING ABOUT ITS COLLAPSE IN THE SHORT OR MID-TERM. WHILE THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THE DIFFICULTY AND PERHAPS IMPOSSIBILITY OF OUR INDUCING CHANGE, AND THAT A SUCCESSOR MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO KEEP THIS COUNTRY TOGETHER AS MOBUTU HAS DONE, THEY NEVERTHELESS FAVOUR OUR ACTIVELY SEEKING OUT AN ALTERNATIVE BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE AND A HOSTILE REGIME HAS TAKEN OVER.

8. FINALLY, I WOULD ADD A FOURTH OPTION -- PHASING DOWN (AS OPPOSED TO MAINTENANCE) OF OUR ASSISTANCE AND PRESENCE IN ZAIRE -- TO BE USED PRIMARILY AS LEVERAGE IN NEGOTIATION OPTION II WITH OUR ALLIES, AND ULTIMATELY WITH MOBUTU AS A MEANS OF BOTH INDUCING HIM TO ACCEPT REFORMS AND ENCOURAGING HIM TO STAY THE COURSE ONCE HE HAS AGREED TO IMPLEMENT THEM.

9. OBVIOUSLY, OPTION II INVOLVES AN EXTREMELY AMBITIOUS AND COMPLICATED SCENARIO, NOT TO MENTION THE CHALLENGE OF OUR COMING UP WITH THE SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES REQUIRED TO SEE IT THROUGH AND THE INEVITABLE RISKS OF FAILURE NO MATTER HOW FAITHFULLY PURSUED. CERTAINLY IT WOULD REQUIRE THE MOST SKILLFUL TACTICS TO BRING MOBUTU ALONG -- A FEAT WHICH GISCARD IS PROBABLY IN A BETTER POSITION TO PERFORM THAN ANYONE ELSE. AND ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT YET CRITICALLY IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN THE SCENARIO WOULD BE ACHIEVING THE AGREEMENT OF GISCARD HIMSELF. HOWEVER, THE FRENCH'S PRESENT EXPOSED POSTURE IN ZAIRE WOULD SEEM TO POSE SERIOUS POLITICAL RISKS FOR THEM, AND THIS MAY PROVIDE US WITH VAUABLE BARGAINING LEVERAGE IN WORKING OUT A COMMON COURSE OF ACTION. AT THE SAME TIME, WE SHOULD BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO LET THE FRENCH INVOLVE US TOO QUICKLY OR DEEPLY IN THEIR OWN APPROACH TO THE ZAIRE PROBLEM UNTIL WE ARE SURE OF THEIR INTENTIONS AND WE HAVE A CLEAR VIEW OF WHERE SUCH INVOLVEMENT MIGHT TAKE US IN THE LONGER RUN.
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